

Message Text

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TAGS: ITALIAN PFOR, SOPN, OVIP (PRESIDENT LEONE) IT
SUBJ: MEDIA REACTION TO PRESIDENT LEONE'S VISIT

SUMMARY: MEDIA ANXIETIES ABOUT POSSIBLE US PRESSURES ON
GOI DURING LEONE VISIT ALLEVIATED SOMEWHAT BY POSITIVE
NATURE MOST COVERAGE, HOWEVER, SEVERAL OBSERVERS NOTED THAT ITALY'S
DOMESTIC AND EXTERNAL VULNERABILITIES REMAIN DESPITE STATEMENTS
THAT LEONE WAS ABLE TO COMMUNICATE BETTER IMAGE OF ITALY'S
VIABILITY DURING VISIT. LEFT REMAINS WARY OF POSSIBLE USG
PRESSURES BUT APPARENTLY RELIEVED BECAUSE IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN
WORSE. END SUMMARY.

1. ITALIAN MEDIA EXPECTED SUBSTANTIVE TALKS TO FOCUS ON
LOANS FOR ITALY, RELOCATION OF NATO BASES, AND STATUS OF
PCI. ALTHOUGH NO DEFINITIVE DEVELOPMENTS THESE ISSUES
ANTICIPATED, THERE WAS GENERAL EXPECTATION THAT US
WOULD MAKE OFFERS OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE IN RETURN FOR
GOI CONCESSIONS ON OTHER TWO ISSUES.

2. COVERAGE OF VISIT LED ALL RADIO-TV NEWSCASTS AND
DOMINATED NEWSPAPER FRONT PAGES. MUCH EMPHASIS PLACED
ON WARM WELCOME AFFORDED LEONE AND PARTY, AND TV NEWS
DEVOTED EXTENSIVE SEGMENTS TO CEREMONIAL ASPECTS, E.G.
LEONE'S HONORARY DEGREE, EXCHANGE OF TOASTS, ETC. FEELING
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CONVEYED THAT LEONE WAS RECEIVED WITH GENUINE AND WARM

EXPRESSIONS OF US FRIENDSHIP FOR ITALY.

3. CO-EXISTING WITH THIS WAS HEAVIER UNDERLYING COMMENTARY
THAT ANY AID TO ITALY WOULD CARRY FEARFUL POLITICAL
STRINGS. MIDDLE POSITION TYPIFIED BY /IL GIORNALE'S/
GIANFRANCO PIAZZESI: "WE HAVE BEEN LUCKY THAT NATO GENERALS
HAVE NOT CONSIDERED IT INDISPENSABLE TO TRANSFER SOME
MILITARY BASES TO BRINDISI OR NAPLES. THANK GOD LEONE AND
MORO CAN ASSURE FORD AND KISSINGER ABOUT ITALY'S FULL
LOYALTY TO INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS... SINCE EVEN COMMUNISTS
HAVE EXCLUDED POSSIBILITY OF OVERTHROWING ALLIANCE.
HOWEVER, THEY ARE UNABLE TO OFFER LEAST GUARANTEE ABOUT
POLITICAL STABILITY OF OUR COUNTRY." /CORRIERE DELLA SERA/
ADDED: "FOREIGN AID HAS A PRICE... FOREIGN INTERFERENCE
WILL DEPEND ON EXTENT WE ARE CAPABLE... HOWEVER, WE SHALL
BE GOVERNED BY THOSE WHO COME TO OUR AID, IF WE ARE NOT ABLE
TO GOVERN BY OURSELVES."

4. CONSERVATIVE /IL TEMPO/ SAID "IDEA MUST BE DISMISSED
THAT FORD AND KISSINGER WOULD ATTEMPT LEAST INTERFERENCE
IN OUR DOMESTIC AFFAIRS." DC ORGAN /IL POPOLO/SAID THAT
LEONE LEFT BEHIND HIM AN IMAGE OF AN ITALY WHICH HAS THE
ABILITY TO EMERGE FROM A "CRISIS WHICH IS NOT SOLELY
ITALIAN."

5. LEFT-OF-CENTER COMMENTATORS MOST FEARFUL THAT US
MADE EXPLICIT DEMANDS. /IL GLOBO'S/ BARBARA SPINELLI
STATED FLATLY THAT "WASHINGTON GAVE EXPLICITY "NO" TO
HISTORIC COMPROMISE." COMMUNIST OFFICIAL ORGAN /L'UNITA'/
AND COMPANION /PAESE SERA/ BOTH SAW US CONCERN OVER PCI
GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION AS DOMESTIC INTERFERENCE
INSUFFICIENTLY RESISTED BY LEONE DELEGATION. /PAESE SERA/
CORRESPONDENT JOHN CAPELLI ADDED "BEYOND USUAL ASSURANCES...
AMERICAN SHOWED HER USUAL FACE, AND THEREFORE "AMERICA'S
CREDIBILITY IN ITALY IS STILL QUESTIONABLE." SOCIALIST /AVANTI/
INTERPRETED ALLEGED LACK OF DIRECT US PRESSURE AS AMERICAN
CONCERN TO AVOID CRISES IN ALLIANCE COUNTRIES "WHEN
MAIN OBJECTIVE IS FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION."

6. AFTER LEONE'S RETURN, ALL MEDIA EMPHASIZE THAT RESPITE
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IN DOMESTIC INFLUENCING AFFORDED BY VISIT NOW OVER AND
COUNTRY HEADED FOR SITUATION WHERE VIABILITY OF PRESENT
GOVERNMENT WILL BE PUT TO ULTIMATE TEST IN UPCOMING WEEKS. BEAUDRY

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